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Ginger Moose Sestina

Patti White

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Ginger Moose Sestina

She passed him a jar of pickled ginger,
drew the sleek metal
of her knife over the raw moose
and said to him "chop!
then put the bones in the burlap
bag and tie the bag to the stake."

He wept when he saw the lonely stake,
wept tears as pink and sharp as ginger,
when he saw the many sets of bones in burlap.
He would sharpen the edge, the metal,
when he returned and he would chop
again and again until the last moose

was gone. He was sick of moose,
the gamy meat so stringy. The stakes
of the marriage had gotten high, a little chop
in the sea of bliss, a little too much ginger
in the red of her hair. She had a metal
hairclip, but the sheets were all burlap

and they both, as nights wore on, got burlap
burns, then scabs. Had he been a moose
he would have avoided the metal
traps, he thought, escaped being steak
dinner, even a filet browned in ginger,
no matter how finely chopped.

She saw it as a matter of chop
and chill. She wanted to wrap burlap,
fresh linen soaked in ginger,
around the antlers of the moose,

to tie the pickled antlers to stakes
and let them freeze like metal.

Outside, the sky was like metal
and the waves on the lake had chop
and foam iced into them. The stakes
holding down her husband, his body burlap
cold and burly as a rotting moose,
were crusted with rust like ginger.

They both had metal hearts clothed in burlap,
and every chop of the knife against moose
drove the stake deeper, and bled with ginger.

About Patti White

Patti White is the author of three collections of poetry, *Tackle Box* (2002), *Yellow Jackets* (2007), and *Chain Link Fence* (2013), all from Anhinga Press. Her work has appeared in *Iowa Review*, *Mississippi Review*, *Nimrod*, *Forklift Ohio*, *River Styx*, *DIAGRAM*, and *New Madrid*, among others. She teaches creative writing at the University of Alabama, and is the Director of Slash Pine Press.